Balancing Structure and Learning in an Open Prison

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Leira Prison is a branch of Trondheim Prison, functioning as a relatively small, open prison with a maximum capacity of only 29 inmates. Leira Prison applies the method 'consequence pedagogy.' This article aims to pinpoint how consequence pedagogy is executed at Leira. 50% of the Leira inmates are released back into society, while new ones enter the prison. It is therefore interesting to see how they balance structure and at the same time adjust to changes, enabling Leira Prison to continue as a learning organization. This article identifies three items, consequence pedagogy and the view of humans, maintenance of the philosophy and coherence in the community, and self-regulation of justice through interaction. The use of consequence pedagogy is deeply aligned to their positive view of humans and has generated a constructive organization based on empowerment and involvement of both staff and inmates. Consequently, management, staff and inmates maintain the philosophy of consequence pedagogy through interaction and self-regulation. However, questions regarding the fundamentals of the consequence pedagogy are not raised.

Keywords: management; knowledge; learning; prison; consequence pedagogy; view of humans

Introduction

Dilulio (1990) observed that prisons are very different and that they are run differently. He also noted that the word 'prison' had a quite bad connotation in the literature. Looking to popular films, for instance the Hollywood film *Shawshank Redemption* featuring Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman (Darabont, 1994), prisons seem to be run by a control-and-rule oriented regime where the director is corrupt, and the wardens exploit the systems and create alliances with inmates. The movie also portrays a Hobbesian state waging war against the prisoners where assault and gang rapes are

practiced. The individual is not seen and inmates are not prepared for reha-
bilitation by the correctional system, thus institutionalizing them to depend
upon the system. A more positive outlook, although introducing a new per-
spective, is presented by the film *Caesar Must Die* by the Taviani brothers
(Taviani & Taviani, 2012). In a high-security correctional facility in Rome,
inmates with severe sentences are about to set up the play Julius Caesar
by William Shakespeare. The film exposes a more humane side of the in-
mates, showing their passion for the play and finding new meaning in their
lives when given the opportunity. We need to gain better understanding of
the complex task of how to manage prisons in an effective way (Molleman
& Leeuw, 2012). The interaction between the keepers (management and
wardens) and the inmates is clearly interesting from an organizational per-
spective. The question is what the management system is based on, and
how the prison as a system is able to interact and learn.

Leira Prison is situated in rural surroundings approximately seven kilo-
meters outside the city of Trondheim. Since its inception in 1986, Leira has
applied 'consequence pedagogy' – a method based on social learning the-
ory and a humanistic and existential approach. The method was developed
by a Danish philosopher and pedagogue Jens Bay (1982, 2005). Central
aspects of the consequence pedagogy are freedom, choice, action, conse-
quence and responsibility (Bay, 2005). Leira faces the challenge of changing
people (inmates) while at the same time maintaining the pedagogy platform
as well as developing the organization. The following research question is
consequently raised in this article: *How does Leira balance between the
structure of consequence pedagogy and the ability to learn and develop?*

Theoretical Background

Traditionally, organizational effectiveness of prisons has been viewed in
terms of control, rather than rehabilitation of the inmates (Craig, 2004;
Sykes, 1958). Houchin (2003) maintains that a reorientation of the way we
think of prisons, and change toward communication of inclusion rather than
rejection of offenders from society after their sentences are served, is nec-
essary. It has also been argued that modern prisons have become more
complex to manage than before (Wright, 2000; Dilulio, 1991; Toch, 1988;
Gendreau, Tellier, & Wormith, 1985). Craig (2004) points out that prison
management is also about personnel management, including the inmates.
This can be seen as a participatory model, opening up also for empow-
erment among prisons. Dilulio (1987) distinguishes between three types
of prison approaches: control, responsibility and the consensual model.
The difference between these approaches is the degree of control on one
hand, and the degree of cooperation on the other. Taking communication
into account, in a control model prison, communication is restricted to of-

ficial channels going through the chain of command (Dilulio, 1987). The responsibility model prison presents a freer-floating mode, crossing the levels of authority. Typically inmates are more included in the decision-making processes (Dilulio, 1987). Reisig (1998) found that those prisons possessing a responsibility and consensual model often reported lower levels of serious and less serious disorder than prisons with a control model. Historically and traditionally, prisons are seen as a more humane alternative to punishment (Sykes, 1958). More recent writers claim that prisons with the fewest security lapses tend to apply programmes that keep prisoners occupied, as well as contribute to their skills (McCorkle, Miethe, & Drass, 1995; Gaes and Mcguire, 1985). It is hoped that these skills will also have an effect after release from custody (Craig, 2004). Johnson and Bennett (1995) found that programmes and hobbies helped both inmates and staff to manage boredom in the prison, since time in a prison seems to pass at a slower pace than in society at large. In their survey, Molleman and Leeuw (2012) found that safety, human dignity and efforts made regarding reintegration, as perceived by inmates, are connected to staff characteristics. Garland (1990) argues that the staff is the primary bearer of the penal culture and the conditions for the prisoners. However, there are a limited numbers of studies on the interaction between staff behaviour and orientation when explaining inmates' perception of the conditions. When inmates interpret the staff's authority as merely procedural, there are less inmate misconduct and rule violations (Reisig & Mesko, 2009). Liebling and Arnold (2004) reported that respectful treatment by staff, as perceived by inmates, is highly correlated with various dimensions of prison life, such as perceptions of humanity. Similar results are found in relation to distress to inmates (Liebling, Durie, Stiles, & Tait, 2005).

Gaes, Camp, Nelson, and Saylor (2004) write that in 25 state and federal American and Canadian jurisdictions 48% pronounce that efforts should be made to treat prisoners humanely. Similar pronouncements are made in England, Wales and in the Netherlands. At the same time, mission statements do not guarantee the realization of these goals or prison correction resulting from them (Molleman & Leeuw, 2012). We believe that perception of the inmates is important for the organization in order to learn.

The idea that an organization could learn and knowledge could be stored over time was a key breakthrough, which was first articulated by Cyert and March (1963). A significant portion of the literature on organizational learning is founded on the individual learning theory, while social learning theory in the organizational learning literature has grown out of criticism of the individual approach (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2011). Argyris and Schön (1987, 1996) pointed to the interaction between organizational members focusing on the processes restricting an organization to single-loop learning (fo-

cusing merely on adjusting the organization within a given assumption), while other organizations ask more fundamental and critical questions on how things are actually done. This is a more fundamental question. Stacey (1996) points out that this form is more likely to result in innovation and creativity. Argyris and Schöns' (1978, 1996) concept can be viewed as part of the same scheme as March (1991); distinction between exploitation and exploration. Both forms are important depending on the purpose; however, exploration can gain the most impact. Argyris and Schön (1996) also stress the deutero learning concept, i.e. meta-learning focusing on critical overview and reflection of the learning process. Flatter organizational structures create a tension that elicits development by employee development. This individual learning contributes to a transformation process in the organization (Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1990). Thus organizations should adopt flat, decentralized organizational structures that facilitate open communication and dialogue (Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1999).

Interpersonal challenges experienced in less hierarchical organizations encourage individuals to engage in developing communication and other interpersonal skills, creating organizational learning (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). The learning organization model is seen as a context where learning improves as a result of proactive end empowering intervention by senior management (Sicilla & Lytras, 2005). De Geus (1988) stresses the importance of learning from planning by looking ahead and seeing different scenarios. Here De Geus is in line with Senges' concept of visioning, which means seeing different perspectives (Senge, 1990).

A distinction has been made between the 'first' and the 'second' way of organizational learning. The first way is identified as individuals' skills and knowledge acquisition in organizations as systems, and learning through participation in communities of practice. The second way is about learning participating in communities of practice. The 'third way' of organizational learning is defined as the development of experience and knowledge by inquiry (or reflective thinking) in social worlds held together by commitment. One of the practical implications of the 'third way' of organizational learning is to bring intuition and emotion to the fore in organizational development and learning. The implication for research is to work with situations and events as units of analysis in order to understand individuals and organizations as being mutually forming and formed (Elkjaer, 2004). In this case, the focus of learning is more on the interaction between actors and implies that understanding is a form of social construct (Fiske and Taylor, 2013). Brandi and Elkjaer's (2011) point of departure are the theories of John Dewey (1916). Dewey (1916) believes that learning takes place through social interaction and cannot yet be passed from person to person, this implies a social constructionist's approach to knowledge management (Easterby-Smith

and Lyles, 2011). Dewey's notion of experience is not to be confused with the one found in humanistic and individual-oriented psychology, in which experiencing is viewed as intrinsically physical, mental and private processes. Dewey's concept covers both the individual and the world, and experience is always culturally mediated (Bernstein, 1960; Dewey, 1981; Miettinen, 2000). However, to quote John Dewey; 'To "learn from experience" is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence"' (Dewey, 1916, p. 140). We position this paper along with Brandi and Elkjaer's (2011) social learning theory, as this maintains that the point of departure for learning is life experience: 'All social learning theory departs from an understanding participation processes emphasizing both issues of knowing and issues of being and becoming' (Brandi and Elkjaer, 2011, p. 24).

Case Description

Leira Prison started up in 1986, and its manager has been there from the outset. There are several buildings located on the property: a barn and a stable, a few hothouses for plants, a market garden with an indoor shop, and a repair shop for cars. Additionally, there are two smaller buildings with two apartments where inmates may enjoy family visits for a short period of time on the weekends, provided they have permission in advance. While there are no fences around the property, the prison boundaries are indicated by crossroads and buildings. A prisoner moving beyond these limits is considered to be attempting escape.

In total, there are 50 people at Leira, divided into the following groups: 25 male and four female inmates, 13 prison guards, four employees in the market garden (two full-time and two part-time positions), three managers, and one employee from a nearby technical school in the car repair shop. The staff does not wear uniforms. Managers, employees and inmates are on a first-name basis. This conveys a message of equality between inmates and staff, in marked contrast to the traditional division between prison staff and inmates in prisons at large. A central aspect of Leira is that inmates apply for coming to Leira and this can only be attempted after serving at least three years in a traditional prison. Leira is governed by the same laws and regulations as Norwegian prisons in general, but the institution has had the opportunity to develop with relative freedom within the legislative framework. The prison has chosen to give the inmates considerable personal freedom. Since its inception in 1986, Leira has applied 'consequence pedagogy' – a method based upon the social learning theory and a humanistic and existential approach. The method has been developed by a Danish philosopher and pedagogue Jens Bay (1982, 2005). Leira has maintained close contact with Bay over the years, principally because all employees

at Leira are trained thoroughly in the method developed by Jens Bay. Consequence pedagogy is anchored in the existential viewpoint that each individual has free will and therefore will have to take responsibility for his/her own actions and their ensuing consequences (Bay, 2005). The way Leira applies consequence is in line with Bay (1982, 2005) considerations on how to apply it. Central aspects are freedom, choice, action, consequence, and responsibility. The following are Leira beliefs as stated in their documents and reported by Olsvik, Johansen, and Steiro (2007, p. 13); 'When we say that humans are "thinking, willing and acting" we need to have in mind that this is meant subjectively – though dialectic relations to other people. In order to be able to understand how each inmate thinks, we need to be in a dialogue with each person and refrain from judging the other by applying our own unfounded beliefs.' Consequences are not considered to be mere punishments or sanctions, but are rather viewed to be the logical results of one's actions (Olsvik et. al. 2007; Olsvik, Johansen, & Steiro, 2008). Such a paradigm gives the individual a choice and provides each inmate with an opportunity for personal development by learning new and more constructive modes of behaviour. Central aspects of the consequence pedagogy are freedom, choice, action, consequence, and responsibility (Bay, 2005). Leira faces the challenge of changing people (inmates), while at the same time maintaining the pedagogy platform and developing the organization. Thus, the following research question is posed in this article: *How does Leira balance between the structure of consequence pedagogy and the ability to learn and develop?*

Method and Collection of Data

In this study, the research question as well as the studied case is focused on Leira Open Prison and how Leira's pedagogical approach is suited for organizational learning. First, this is a case study, which is very useful for studying small samples in depth or to understand phenomena (Yin, 2004; Stake, 1995, Ragin & Becker, 1992). A case study can involve producing context-dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary (Flyvbjerg, 2001; 2006). Second, in the study of human affairs, only context-dependent knowledge appears to exist. While there has been skepticism to the case study approach, it is however considered an opportunity to learn something (Eysenck, 1976). Flyvbjerg (2006) claims that case study is suitable for different research activities. However, case study design has been prone to claims of containing a subjective bias and of not being able to generalize the produced results (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

As part of the case study and in order to answer the research question, a mix between different qualitative approaches was chosen. The data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews, participant observation both

formally (in meetings, etc.), and informally during daily activities. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) claim that the word 'qualitative' means investigations that aim at a deeper understanding of how people construct their lives in a meaningful manner. It can also generate knowledge of interactions between people and how these interactions are interpreted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The interviews were semi-structured, based on a prepared and not too closely knitted interview guide, where the informants had the freedom to speak on topics they found important to convey. Interviews lasted approximately one hour to one hour and a half. An approach like this offers the informants an opportunity to express their personal views and explain issues in their own words (McCracken, 1988). Most interviews were recorded digitally and transferred to sound files on a PC for full transcription and further analysis.

The project was formally registered with the Norwegian Data Inspectorate and a permit for the project was obtained from the Norwegian Correctional Services. Since Leira is a prison with convicted inmates, it was of high importance that ethical considerations and precautions were taken into account. Ethical considerations are important in qualitative methods, since these methods provide a rich source of information on informants' public and private lives, and consequently researchers are responsible for the maintenance of high ethical standards (Silverman, 1993). It should be emphasized that the inmates were not asked about the reason for their prison sentence in order for the researcher to avoid personal presuppositions and possible apprehension when meeting alone with almost every kind of convict in a one-on-one dialogue inside the prison. Information was processed several times: first during the interviews, then by listening and transcription, and finally in writing for further reading and analysis (Kvale, 1996).

During the participant observations, full accounts of the meetings were made a short time afterwards in order to be submitted to the management as a means of communicating the process and serve as an opportunity for feedback and comments. On less formal occasions, notes were taken. The collection of data took place from October 2006 until May 2007. In total it comprised of 15 interviews with present or former inmates, interviews with all three managers of Leira, two group interviews with the staff, and five interviews with some of the external partners of Leira. In addition to the information gathered informally through participant observation, there were 18 referred observations from different meetings at Leira; from the introductory course for new inmates or from interviews with potential new inmates.

Based on the referred observations and transcriptions of the interviews, we performed an item-centred analysis of all the material, searching for clues and patterns (Thagaard, 1988). From the material we identified the

following categories: interviews and notes from observations. Peer discussions between the researchers were also important in order to compare and contrast the material. The data collected was also discussed among the researchers as recommended by Yin (2004) in order to limit the individual researcher's interpretations of the data.

Results and Analysis

Analysis of qualitative data is rarely a straightforward process. However, Kvale (1996) writes that analysis of qualitative data goes through different stages. Typically, an initial analysis is performed during the interviews. Certain patterns and themes may emerge as clues for further investigations. This can lead to adjustments in the interview guide. However, this was not the case in our study. Kvale (1996) also highlights that at some point the scientist assumes the data collection reached a saturating level where the scientist is no longer provided with new information. The research team, at such a juncture, decides whether to stop the interviewing. The second phase consists of data transcribing. Again, data is interpreted and can be seen as a non-linear process. Observation notes served as a reflection when put down on paper. In the review of the empirical findings, as seen in relation to theory, reflections and interpretations, the following three items were identified as relevant in answering the research question:

- consequence pedagogy and the view of humans,
- maintaining the philosophy through community and coherence,
- self-regulated justice through interaction.

In the following section, each item will be elaborated and discussed. We will also justify the connections between the items and the knowledge that can be derived from Leira. In addition, we will discuss the quality of the findings and their external validity.

Consequence Pedagogy and the View on Humans

Leira's staff interacts with the inmates as much as possible and their main tool is dialogue. The staff reported that it was very important for them to foresee difficult situations that may result in serious consequences. However, they also said that inmates are encouraged to assess situations, predict eventual outcomes, and act accordingly. Inmates reported a similar view. We observed that staff members work consciously at not giving advice but rather, through dialogue and the use of questions, empower inmates to find their own solutions. All new inmates are, over a three-day period, given an introductory course of approximately six hours in duration on Leira and consequence pedagogy. This is to ensure that the newcomers have a clear understanding of Leira, its norms and values. In a system such as this, it

is possible to be open with the inmates, ensuring that consequences also include those of a positive nature. We observed that staff and inmates work together on an everyday basis, as well as engage in mutual activities in their spare time. The staff is expected to participate in leisure activities outside fixed working hours. The inmates must meet the same requirements at work as do any other employees in the general population. They are expected to take responsibility for their job, and are not permitted to call in sick without a good reason. In addition to the focus on job training, Leira concentrates on helping the inmates to develop social skills. The inmates themselves have signed a written agreement to partake in the social community at Leira.

The inmates viewed the applied consequence pedagogy as positive and expressed the perception that they were addressed as humans. They regarded it as a good and fair framework that was easy to understand. They knew what to expect should they break the rules and had no problems with the methodology. Many inmates considered the mandatory physical activities to be a positive requirement, and used this as an opportunity to increase their physical exercises in order to change and grow as persons. In the interviews, the former drug addicts particularly reported that they found this activity helpful, both mentally and physically, in order to live without any intoxicating substances. Furthermore, the management explained that, over time, a number of inmates at Leira improved their physical condition. According to this, the staff always expressed their appreciation of these accomplishments and often rewarded the prisoners who reached their goals with prizes. Management and staff emphasized that the prizes are not the crucial factor, but serve more as a means to uphold and maintain the system.

Our informants described the managers and general staff as being very competent, even if not all of the staff were equally esteemed by the inmates. They believed, however, that the entire staff worked in the inmates' best interest. This is seen as a prerequisite for the prisoner's perception of the condition (Molleman & Leeuw, 2012). The inmates typically described the wardens as humane and wise, but at the same time quite realistic. The inmates felt that such characteristics were very important in a place such as this. On their part, the wardens stated that they needed to be genuinely engaged in the inmates' wellness and in their future, otherwise the inmates would soon see them as insincere. This point was also considered a prerequisite for the staff's chance to have any influence on the inmates at all. The wardens claimed that new inmates may typically find it difficult to really believe in what they are offered in terms of personal freedom, but most of them settle down quickly and begin to cooperate with other inmates.

Von Krogh, Ichijo, and Nonaka (2000) point out that the key 'quality of knowledge workers is their humanness' (2000, 12). The goal of organiza-

tional learning is therefore to bring out this humanness by creating a proper balance (Nonaka, 1998). Humaneness arises in our relationships with others through communities (Plaskoff, 2011). The continuity of the community is ensured from a tactical point of view with activities such as meetings, distributing information, setting agendas, and facilitating gatherings. The second form is by mentoring, namely giving value directions (Plaskoff, 2011). When we look at the interview data, we see that there is a clear link between humanness and consequence pedagogy. They go very well hand in hand at Leira. This can be illustrated by an interview with the region director of the Correctional Service North. He said in the interview; 'What is important to note here is that the way they work at Leira is very constructive. I also think it is important to be able to feel that things are predictable as well as safe. And in my experience of Leira, that is how it is. There is a red thread running throughout the whole organization, as there is a fundamental philosophy which influences everything they do.'

Several inmates stated that they were given a second chance when they came from a high-security facility to an open prison. They also mentioned the canteen with small tables, allowing small groups to sit together – management, inmates and staff alike. Based on the observations, we found that management, wardens, and inmates are on a first-name basis when addressing each other and talking about each other. No uniforms are used, entailing that clothes do not create a distance.

Many of the inmates were parents, and, in the interview, they reported their appreciation of how Leira arranged for them to normalize their family lives through extended visits with their children and spouses in separate apartments. Most informants mentioned that they felt Leira worked with them in order to make their lives as similar as possible to living outside the prison, in ordinary society.

We observed in our study that many former inmates call or visit Leira. Also, at the end of most meetings or other informal occasions, we observed the staff ended up talking about the former prisoners in a very positive way, as people with whom they still had relations. Good communities turn disagreements into learning experiences and chances to foster understanding through managed conversations (Von Krogh et. al., 2000). Members express different opinions, approaches and philosophies and find ways to reconcile differences, combine approaches, and create new knowledge (Von Krogh et. al., 2000). We observed that staff members often recounted former prisoners' accomplishments achieved after having left Leira. In the unfortunate instances where this was not the case, the staff still offered understanding and expressions of hope for their future success. We perceive this to be a special phenomenon, a cultural artifact in Leira's organization. It also demonstrates an arena for knowledge sharing (Nonaka, Toyama, &

Konno, 2000). Even though they were not all success stories, former in-
mates were always mentioned with respect and with expressions of hope
for them. The consequence pedagogical method builds upon the human-
istic and existential view, which is internalized by the managers and the
staff. Their personal views were noticeable in practice as more than mere
theory; namely, as a holistic view of a person as a whole, an undividable
entity. Hence, the individual's subjective experience represents the truth for
that person. In practice, this view facilitates real relationships between the
inmates and the staff, as they are all human individuals of equal worth,
working together to achieve common goals. Naturally they have different
roles and authority, but this does not mean that someone is above anyone
else. The criterion for judging an individual's worth is by how he or she acts –
from day to day – not what that person has done in the past. This approach
gives the inmates the freedom to choose new ways of behaviour without
anyone taking their past actions into account. One warden answered the
question of what is special about the consequence pedagogical method in
this way:

> It must be the fact that we see the human being as a whole, and that
> we provide new competence on many levels. It is not enough just to
> learn to drive a car. You have to learn to get up in the morning and to
> function in a small community; you must socialize with other people.
> The mastering of practical tasks is easy to learn, but all other things
> this involves, may be just as important [. . .] that you become a whole
> person who functions well together with the rest of us.

An inmate describes it like this:

> We still have lost our liberty because we have physical limitations as
> to where we are allowed to move around [. . .] so it might be right to
> say that the wall is situated in our heads. But for the soul [. . .] it is
> actually much better. Assuming you can handle the choices you have
> to make continuously.

The two previous quotes highlight the empowerment, of course within
limitations, at Leira. We see the view of human as the essence and the
point of departure. In the implementation of consequence pedagogy with its
focus on openness, respect freedom and choice go well in hand. However,
consequence pedagogy executed without the fundamentals in the positive
and humanistic view of people might be something completely different.

Maintaining the Philosophy through Community and Coherence

Leira has a strong and united organizational culture that not only includes
the managers and staff, but also the inmates. The only indication of existing

subcultures is the form of self-regulated justice, which changed from the traditional, negative form, as found in closed prisons, into a more positive form. Some informants mentioned that new prisoners would sometimes cause trouble in the social group and that they would usually settle down after being informed by the others of how unwelcome their behaviour was. Some inmates wanted Leira to be selective about whom they accepted, to make sure that hardened criminals who failed to realize how fortunate they were to serve out their sentence there would not upset the positive environment. However, this is not Leira's policy. They will admit anyone to serve their time at Leira, as long as the applicants qualify and accept the rules.

We observed a significant amount of noise from a group of second-generation inmates, i.e. inmates with a criminal record, where one of the parents had a criminal record as well. In that case we witnessed a lot of frustration, especially from the staff and other inmates. In an interview, an inmate serving life imprisonment sentence said that Leira should consider whether Leira might not be suited for all prisoners. However, these second-generation inmates had not violated any Leira rule, so sending them back to a high-security facility was not an option. The response was that management and staff organized a meeting with the inmates, informing them, in a casual way, of their observations. They continued by restating the prison's values and norms, explaining again why they are the way they are. They also reminded everyone about their personal commitments and responsibilities. In another case, the staff witnessed two foreign prisoners from a non-western culture who did not seem to be willing to be a part of the community. A question regarding whether this was a result of racism was raised among the staff. No one had witnessed any behaviour that would indicate this. The two non-western inmates were asked, but they reported no racism or other form of excluding behaviour, although reporting behaviour and reporting culture might differ. Based on the conversation with the two inmates and other inmates, this was understood as a communication challenge to understanding the rules and what was expected from themselves and others. In an interview with another outsider, the balance at Leira was explained in an interview with the representative from The Norwegian Labour and Welfare administration (NAV):

> The flexibility is not easy to handle, as one probably needs to be very conscious about the fine line between freedom and certain conditions for action in this kind of organization.

It is worth noting that leadership in a community of practice is distributed and takes two forms. The first form is administrative leadership. Bottoms (1999) claims that prison management may have an important indirect influ-

ence on prison conditions. For instance, superiors can incite staff to adopt a desirable orientation towards inmates. In this case, offering education, courses and trainings are common means. Molleman and Leeuw (2012) point to the fact that prison management can pursue a balance in supportive and rule orientation, something to consider since they both have positive connections with dimensions of perceived prison conditions. Transformational leadership focuses on faith rather than tasks and economic interests (Northouse, 1997; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). According to Argyris and Schön's (1996) perspective, we found significant evidence of congruence between theory and practice at Leira. If an effort or method did not have the expected outcome, we observed that the people involved quickly returned to the starting point to investigate the reasons and make the necessary changes. Both management and the general staff pointed out that they often made mistakes because they had too little information or had misunderstood a situation. Inmates confirmed this in interviews.

Self-Regulated Justice through Interaction

Inmates, as well as staff, mentioned the common 'self-regulated justice' that prevails in prisons. In closed prisons, this self-justice is often harsh and negative and is often meted out by the inmates as well as the prison guards. In contrast, Leira's self-justice is a positive, regulating force within general social life. The staff claimed this positive self-regulated justice to be so potent that often no corrective action was necessary on their part. Inmates coming from closed prisons soon learned that the other inmates did not appreciate bad behaviour. Up to 90% of the inmates at Leira are serving sentences for drug-related offences. Generally, drugs are considered to constitute some of the greatest challenges for prisons, especially when the prisoner himself has been addicted. Many new inmates barely completed the process of becoming addiction free before entering Leira; however, as sobriety is a stipulated requirement, most inmates comply without relapse. The council meeting, where the applications to transfer to Leira were processed, showed that no differentiating took place when applications were discussed.

> When we shall start on a project, the inmates take part in the planning from the beginning in order to be involved from the start, instead of later being told what to do. They gain ownership of the task in question. And many times it might be the inmate who has the most knowledge and competence [. . .] plumbing, construction work or electrical work. [Employee]

According to Argyris and Schön's theory, organizations often experience a discrepancy between their espoused theory and their theory-in-use (Ar-

gyris & Schön, 1996). At Leira there is an apparent congruence between their espoused theory and their theory-in-use, with reference to what we experienced. Leira is also continuously looking for new partners in order to maximize the inmates' possibilities for rehabilitation and successful re-entry to society.

> The mentality among the inmates here is much to stay 'clean,' because everybody knows that it is very stupid not to do so. It doesn't take long before you understand that you are really lucky to be here instead of in another prison. In other words, it is pretty stupid to get yourself caught because of a positive urine sample. The general attitude among the other inmates is that if this happens, it serves you right to suffer the consequences. [Inmate]

On the other hand, few gave a critique of the consequence philosophy itself. That in itself might be problematic and can serve as a preservation of the system, thus not representing double-loop learning, but rather preserving the system in itself and thereby constituting single-loop learning. If, in the future, Leira decides to expand their activities and include more external programmes for rehabilitation of the prisoners, this may cause imbalance in their overall organization. This was raised as a concern among some of the staff members. A similar development was studied and observed in the work of Schumacher (1997). Kang, Morris, and Snell (2007) conclude that culture affects learning, but argue that exploratory learning may be suppressed in cultures emphasizing strong ties. This could suggest that feeling too 'comfortable' within a particular setting may not necessarily be conducive to deeper level learning (Shipton & DeFilippi, 2011). Good communities turn disagreements into learning experiences and chances to foster understanding through managed conversations (Von Krogh et. al., 2000). Members express different opinions, approaches and philosophies and find ways to reconcile differences, combine approaches, and create new knowledge. We are of the opinion that questions of a double-loop character are important in all varieties of organizations, but in particular in organizations with strong ties where the overall perception is that the organization is operating well.

Prisons are now subject to more tight budgetary control and are often obliged to report their performance against a number of different measures (Houchin, 2003). If, due to budgetary reduction, Leira decides to cut down on the training of personnel, this may cause more severe consequences than anticipated, regardless of the systemic nature of Leira as an organization. De Geuss (1988) writes that scenarios can be powerful in addressing different challenges and different solutions as a means not only to create strategies, but also to foster learning. Senge (1990) and Pedler et. al.

(1990) stress the importance of working on the future. In particular, Senge (1990) highlights the visions as a contributor to learning and change. Based on the interviews, it became apparent that the meetings at Leira played a significant role. In our participative observations we noted that the meetings both with and without inmates were highly structured and that the meeting agenda was applied at all times and carried out the way it was intended. The participants were very conscious about the meeting culture. Consequence pedagogical themes or methods were often referred to and were used to explain or elaborate on something in discussions or were used as a means for new learning. In meetings, while talking about inmates not present, the tone was still as respectful and proper as if the person had been present to hear what was being discussed. This was also reported as something they were explicit about.

Conference meetings with management, employees, and inmates also played an important role. This was strongly supported by all groups of informants. The manager would begin by welcoming everyone, then preparing people for inmates to arrive and stating their names. In the next point of the agenda, inmates soon to be released were mentioned. In one general meeting we observed that the manager refrained from using words like 'if everything goes well' or 'if people behave' in his speech. He talked about the release from prison as something positive and implied that all people present would be happy for the people leaving the prison. At one meeting, the manager predicted a nice and steady period with a few changes in the inmate group, adding; 'That is, if no major escapes happen or no-shows after days away from the prison on leave.' This remark was met by a lot of laughter and more joking in return. It was interesting to observe what was called 'Leira's favorite theme.' This was informal talks that would often pop up at the end of meetings and gatherings where the staff would remember and describe previous inmates and their, more often than not, positive situation after the release.

Possible Methodological Issues to be Addressed

In the literature of information games, actors can use information in order to serve their own interests at the expense of interests pertaining to the system as a whole (March & Olsen, 1989; Krehibel, 1987; Shepsle & Weingast, 1987). This could imply that both inmates and employees recognized an interest in keeping a harmonic view. Inmates apply for admission to Leira after having served three years in an ordinary prison. The self-selection can serve as a way of justifying own behaviour and avoiding cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). However, conducting observations over a relatively long period of time should give more insight into the 'back stage' of Leira. A survey without the one-on-one interaction between the

researcher and the respondent could create more space and ensure more comfort in order to raise more critical comments and questions. However, in the end it will of course still be the reader who must make up his or her mind on whether the results are valid (Polkinghorne, 1988). This point of view should not result in the researcher being passive. A reader can make up his or her mind on the validity. However, we acknowledge Tjora (2010), who claims that the overall responsibility for the validity lies solely with the researcher.

Concluding Remarks

The basis of this article is how Leira functions as an organization. Based on our data, Leira has shown itself to be an organization built on a pedagogical platform, but even more important on a distinct view on humans. At the same time, the organization contains patterns of being a learning organization looking forward and adjusting its course when necessary and therefore be in a position to learn through interaction. Leira therefore does not apply to the traditional criticism of prisons seen from a Theory X perspective on inmates, which is basically negative (Craig, 2004). The views reported in particular by the inmates demonstrate small differences between the espoused theory and the theory in use (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Earlier studies have confirmed the importance of staff following the book (Molleman & Leeuw, 2012). The inmates at Leira perceive the rules as clear and relevant, but within the limit, considerations and decisions have to be made. The consequences for breaking the rules are consistent, stated clearly in writing. The consequence pedagogy platform in itself is not questioned and that is something to consider if Leira is to develop as a learning organization. All new inmates are properly informed about Leira, its philosophy and rules. It seems from this study that being met with recognition, respect and a feeling of being on equal terms is viewed as very positive and may well explain the fact that the informants find both Leira and consequence pedagogy to be positive. Over time, the inmates receive increasing responsibility. The consequence pedagogy applied at Leira supports the cooperative approach of a learning organization (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2011). The small size of Leira plays an important role in order for new members to be introduced and socialized into the philosophy. There are relatively many experienced managers, wardens and prisoners to follow up a relatively small number of newcomers. At the same time, Leira is subject of continuous changes, since 50% of the people are changed meaning that the platform must be reconstructed. The structure of consequence pedagogy and the view of humans are applied as a platform, while the institution must at the same time adapt to new situations and new inmates, and also allow the management, staff and inmates to act and be

responsible for their choices. The view of humans and the humanness enables the structure making it flexible and, according to our interpretation, in balance.

The lessons learned for other organizations is that some form of structure on how to interact is very useful, however, the structure and/or other processes must allow for adjustment and learning to be made by all members. It should not be restricted to the management level. At the same time, an organization can clearly benefit from the awareness of its espoused theories and the theories in use, and attempt to lessen the gap, thus creating a more authentic framework. We therefore believe these aspects are generic and might be valid for other organizations as well.

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